

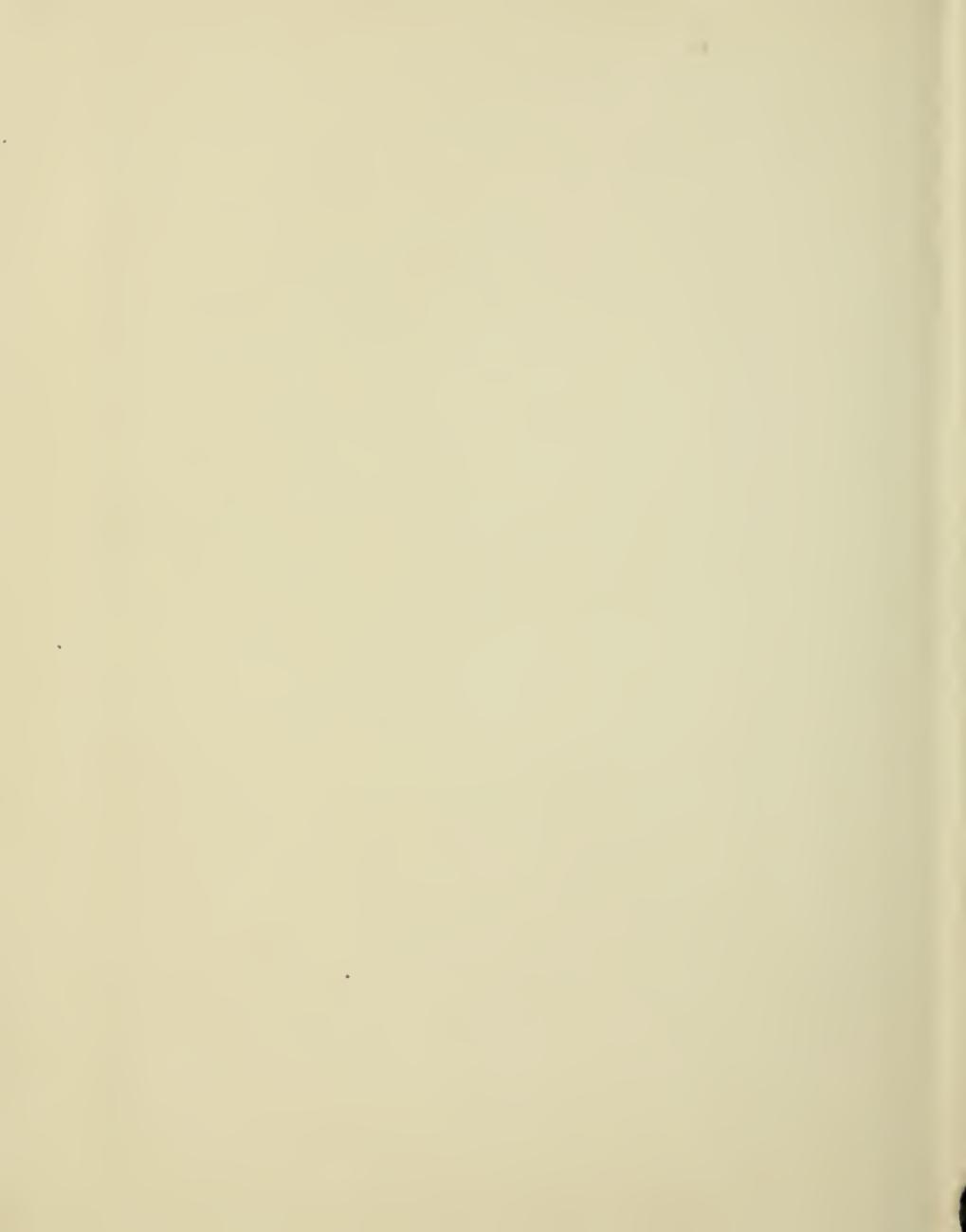
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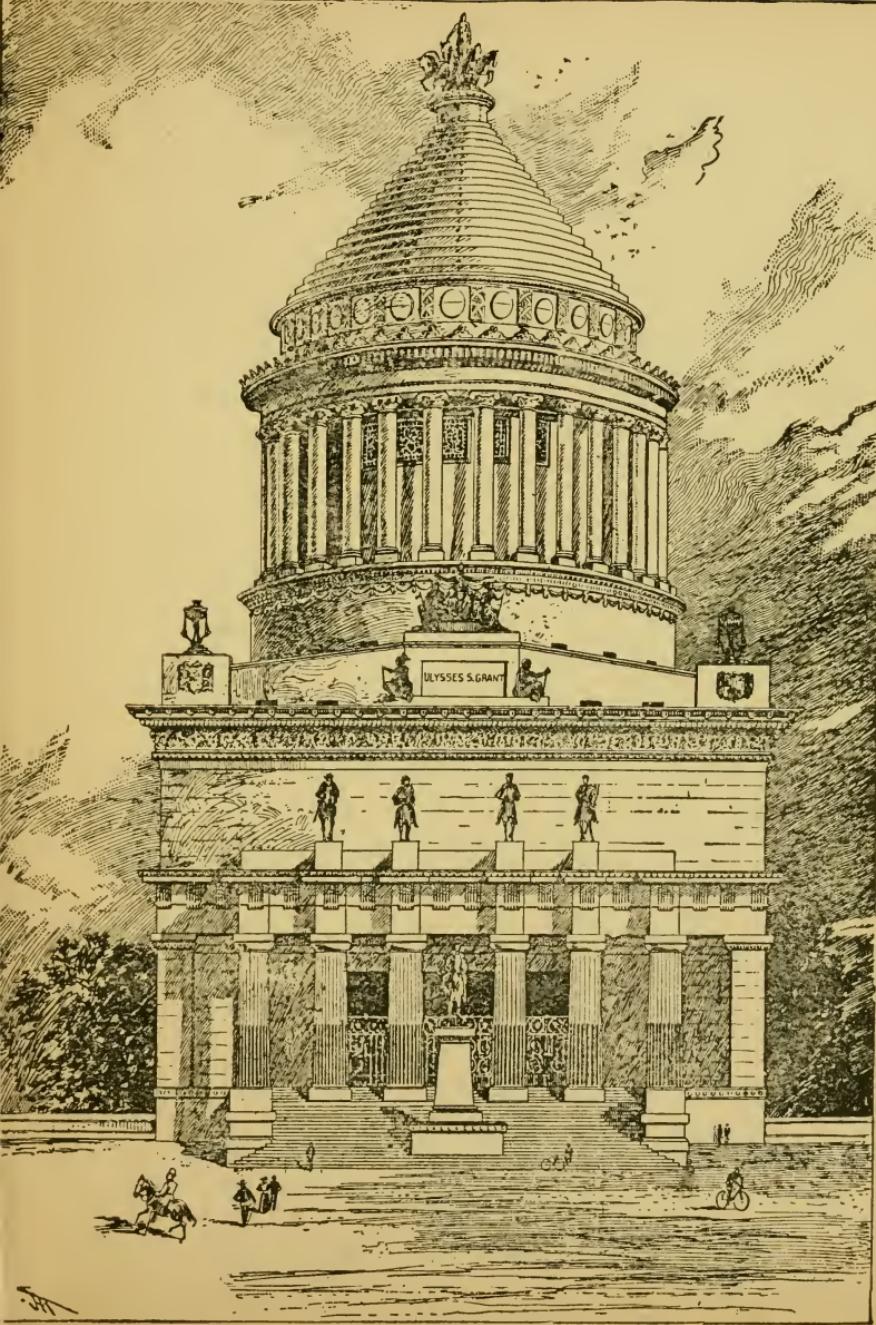
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GENERAL ULYSSES S. GRANT.
Born April 27, 1822. Died July 23, 1885.



LAYING THE HERO TO REST.

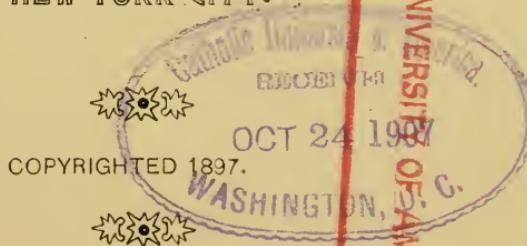
A POEM,

▲▲ BY ▲▲

EDWARD DOYLE,

AUTHOR OF

"MOODY MOMENTS," & "CAGLIOSTRO,"
AND EDITOR OF
"THE UPTOWN VISITOR,"
NEW YORK CITY.



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To

The Officers and Men
of the

Grand Army of the Republic
This Tribute to their Chieflain
Is respectfully dedicated.

New York, April 15, 1897.

EDWARD DOYLE

LAYING THE HERO TO REST.

I.



From out our land the light of joy has gone,
And dark is every dwelling as a grave.
No more shall we see him whom Freedom placed
A fondest mother's trust in, in the strength
Of whose integrity she felt the earth
Grow firm and firmer to her heavenly feet,
As to the feet of Spring. Upon the height,
The Mausoleum looms to hold his form
Within its midnight hush forevermore
Yet, ah! do we not hear the clear, full voice
Of his career of duty to his God
And country, and, in his achievements, see
His spirit's most sublime embodiment?
Do we not know the Hero is the soul
Angelic in maintaining right supreme;
That, hence no tomb nor all the flowering earth
Can shut him from our view; that only Heaven

With broadening azure can pavilion him?
With these reflections let our souls grow calm
As the Pacific, that from eve accepts
The mantle of her peace, when she ascends
To Heaven with all the good which men achiev

II

Above the city's blackness pierced by spires,
In fancy rise; and glancing toward the bay
Behold the fleet collecting like wild birds
That spread their wings for migratory flight.
Then watch the tangled chain of soldiery,
Thrown in huge heaps on every street and square
Uncoil beneath the Marshal's master hand,
And lengthen out without a broken link.
There, where the throng is thickest and most still
Departs the Hero in a winding sheet
Of mournful melody toward Claremont, where

Old Hudson makes the grandest of its sweeps
And most sublime expansion, passing there
Into a realm heroic, where it spreads
Broad as a lake, and mirrors in its depths
The heights where Freedom dashed Oppression down.

III.

Up from the broad, bright bay the warships sail,
Upon the blue midstream toward Riverside,
Where thousands watch for them with wearying eyes.
Slowly they move; the shadow of the earth
Upon the moon eclipsing her, creeps not
More slowly than the mournful armament,
Nor casts a deeper darkness over men.
Larger the vessels grow, and restlessness
Stirs breeze-like thro' the throng along the slope,
And on the hillocks. From the sunny bay,
To the long shadows of the Palisades,

Extend the monitors and sloops of war.
Arrayed in battle line, they flash and boom.
How the earth quakes! how from the coldest depths
The tidal surge of terror splashes white
Across the faces of the multitude,
As tho' they saw the millions slain arise
And fall back ghastly into swallowing earth!
While from the air and from the river rolls
A double dolorous moan among the hills
And valleys of the peopled Palisades,
And down along the black metropolis
Where the battalions, looking up, catch glimpses
Of their old camp in the hundred tents of smoke,
Pitched thick about the ships and over them
With every boom; the camp wherein of old
They flew to arms at midnight or at dawn,
Upon the sudden call, or on the eve
Of battle which rose crimson with the sun,
They flashed incessantly without a sound,

And with dull glare; as lightning's flash at noon,
On summer days before the storm lets fall
Its avalanches, thunderbolts and hail.

IV

Fearful of prancing steed or backing wheel,
The father holds his wild boy by the hand;
Or, lest the crowd may crush him in its swerve
As on a pivot toward the booming ships,
Or toward the wave-like rolling of the drums
Along old Broadway. How the concourse grows!
It does not thunder now with wild acclaim
As when the Hero having rescued Peace
From war's red clutch, marched homeward with his men,
And with enkindled eyes saw everywhere
Our armies breaking into citizens,
Like rugged, roaring Winter into Spring;
Or saw his Arabs let their horses graze

Among the musket sheaves in field and grove,
To clasp their wives and children lily-white,
Beneath the trees or by the broken gate;
And in the ric'y swamp or cotton field
Beheld the freedman, too, with eyes astream,
Yet, bright with the sun-dance of an Easter morn,
Embrace his wife and kin, without the dread
Of ever being dragged from out his hut,—
Out from their sobs and moans and broken hearts,
By a slave-dealer with a whip and hound.

V.

Upon the throng at windows, on the roofs,
The tiers of seats, and on the rocks and trees—
There falls a sudden hush, and long the lull,
As should a lightning linger like the snow;
For now, low as the rumble of the earth,
The drum rolls near and nearer, while the strains

Of martial anguish eddy in the air
Like swallows in the shadow of the storm.
Lo! as the evening star before night's host,
So comes brave Hancock singly in advance
Of the Old Guard, with their arms reversed, and step
Not so responsive to the beat of woe,
As to the quick and thrilling bugle call
Of duty, to fill up the gap in front,
Or lift the fallen standard, not allow
The foe to snatch and twirl in overhead
Across the field and raise a thunder shout
More deadly than the bursting of a bomb
In scarlet torrents on the sleeping camp,
Or thro' the crashing forest where Zouaves
Sit by the camp-fire, telling comrades' deeds,
Or tales of home—the standard, that, raised, torn
With shot and shell was all the broader sail
To catch the breeze of valor from true hearts,
And, by it, be swept up the steepest wave.

VI.

Ye youth who seek out peril for your perch
Or push thro' densest crowds as morning rays
Pervade the branches and wet leaves, and form
Cathedral glory in the darkest woods!
O, all ye youth who now are held alof
Upon the shoulders of all future years,
The giants with the mist upon their eyes,
That ye may let them know what ye behold,
What see ye here to-day? a long sun-shaft
Of glittering arms, and then a dark nightfall
Of civic sorrow, clouds surcharged with rain,
From California's coast, Sierra's peaks,
The Rocky Mountains, prairies, Northern Lakes,
The woods of Maine and from the Southern Gulf,
Passing across our city without break.
Good, but see ye no more than pageantry,
A thing to marvel at, such as the stone,

That cast ablaze from Heaven, lights up the plains
And features of the pointing savages,
Upon the hills and rocks for miles about
Night after night for months? The spectacle
Ye witness is no blaze to be rain-quenched,
Or covered by a storm of sand, ere long;
But bud of Heaven let fall on earth to bloom.
'Tis brotherhood, such as they know above,
Beyond earth's mists, for look ye down the line!
The Blue and Gray commingle. How they march
Shoulder to shoulder, carrying aloft
The sacred burden of their country's grief:

VII.

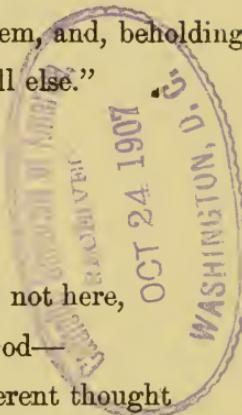
How think these are the Blue and Gray who met
Upon the bridge which only one could pass,
And rushed upon each other with the yell,
And glaring eyes of demons? They, who clinched

With sword and shot, and 'mid the dust and smoke
Jumped on each other's breasts with scowl and curse?
The Blue and Gray, whose clash upon the bridge
Swung it beneath them like an ocean wave,
So that it seemed at times about to break
Its fastenings, and crash down with both of them
Upon the rocks and roll from crag to crag
Like thunder deep and deeper, till, at length,
The gloating vultures from the ancient world
That hovered near might swoop and gorge their fill?
The same old Blue and Gray; and tho' the one
May drag the ordnance, huge and ponderous
With painful memories, it does not lag
In honor to the victor of the bridge,
Who made a way for Freedom thro' his ranks,
To reach the vanquished, and, weep with a voice
That stilled the very heart-beat of the stars:
"O Absalom! O Absalom! my son!
Tears, only tears, have I for thee. With them

I wash thy features of the battle smoke
That never should have stained them, and, beholding
The beauty of thy youth, forget all else."

VIII.

All murmur ceases—nay, have we not here,
The silence of the azure nearest God—
The azure where sublime and reverent thought
Alone can enter? Gleamful with the wings
Of angels, is the silence most profound,
Of the vast throng at Riverside, as, now,
The purple chariot drawn by milk-white steeds
Approaches. At the head of every horse
A freedman walks, with heaviness of heart.
Now, cease the rumbling drum and martial air,
Except afar where they grow echo-like,
Till audible alone in memory;
For the battalion halts, to let the car



Pass thro' the ranks drawn up in bowed array,
And mount the holiest of Freedom's hills;
For there it was that Washington once stood
In anguish, noticing how few, how few
His routed men were, and how great, how great
His undertaking, and where he took heart,
Feeling God's inspiration like a breeze.
Oh! could the Father of our land have flown
Upon prophetic wings to this great hour,
And seen the sword, once his, rise high in Heaven
And glow a comet—viewed with awe and dread,
By every tyrant in the world, and watched
With hope and joy, by every writhing slave!
Could he have seen and heard, Balboa-like,
The millions of the Old World hither sweep
Billow on billow—aye, the dark Atlantic
Where tempests, when they dash not wild at Heaven,
Swim near the surface like a diving bird
And swell the waters with their rising wing,—

Flash from the East to West, and in our land
Extend a bright Pacific, mirroring
The moon without a storm-ring, all the stars,
White, green and crimson, and, sublimer still,
The planets' Freedom and the Azure's Peace!

IX.

The ancient bugler with the youthful face,
Climbs reverently on the purple car,
And lifts his bugle, not with grasp as firm
However, as at Appomatox, when
He seized it from fierce war and sounded Peace
Across the hills and valleys of our land.
He falters, and a tear rests on his cheek.
At length he sounds the taps, the last, long call
Unto the wanderer from the camp, and ah!
Not only do the tents rise into view
Stilly and white, as drift on drift of snow .

But they emit a chill, that, thro' the throng
Send many a tremor. Buckner, Fitz Hugh Lee,
And Johnson draw deep sighs and bow their heads;
Impulsive Sherman sinks his heel in the ground
And forward bends, as though upon his steed,
Resolved to seek his comrade wheresoe'er,
And not return without him! Sheridan,
Ashy of feature, trembles, as he never
Trembled in battle, tho' the earth might quake,
And open black and red with smoke and flame
Beneath his rearing charger; while old soldiers,
Who, to catch breath, would speak, or utter a cry,
But move their livid lips; else, gasp with throats,
As husky as a distant battle's roar.

X.

Boom, O ye warships! boom, each minute boom!
Ye voice the gratitude we fain would shout.

Boom! for ye rouse not from the distant deep,
The monster fratricidal war, to rear
Its hideous head amid the Heavens, and make
The rising, roving and insatiate sun,
Its glaring eye to search for brother's blood,
In every town and village, house and hut,
On mountain and in vale, from coast to coast;
Nay, with the coils of chaos wind about
Our country; snatch her to the dark mid-air
Of lightning and of thunder, and there slash
With her in blindest fury, all the while
Crushing her vigor into streams of gore,
That, like the deluge, leave not one green herb.
Boom! Boom! Ye warships! For did Grant not clutch
The monster, and securing firm foot-room
Upon its crest, draw our republic up
From its grim coils, as it sank earthward! Boom!
Ye warships, oh! a thousand times, Boom, boom!
He smote the monster, cast it into the sea;

And when its carcass of revenge and hate
Rose on the waters—oh, a ghastliness,
As high as Heaven, that, fastened to our shore,
Would shut the sun out and breed pestilence
From age to age,—it moved before his prayer—
A breeze from Heaven; and then the day and night
Became a tempest and a tidal wave
Against the horror, so that, now, it drifts
Among the icebergs that chill not the child,
Held in the father's arms upon the shore.

XI.

Hark! solemnly the chaplain chants the rite.
Hark! for where prayer is, there is God, and men
Here feel His presence touching them with faith
In aims sublimer than the quest of gold,
Pleasure, or empire. Here they feel, in sooth,
That noble deed, and bold inspiring thought
That flames the way to help our fellow-men,

Alone make life; that all is fleeting show,
That is not formative with God on high
In shaping earth for human happiness.
In lightning flashes from their cloud of grief,
They see the hero scud on war's red rack
Across the marsh and stream, the hill and wood,
And by maintaining right supreme, become
An angel, whom they fall before, awe-struck.
Awe-struck, indeed; for clearly they discern
That anguish is the air the hero breathes
Through every pore, in his ascent on high
And bursting thro' the clouds that darken earth.
What! think you that our captain was not racked
With agony, when he sat statuesque
Upon his charger on the clouded peak,
Above the thousand mountains breaking forth
With lightning and with thunder, and beheld
The valleys, thro' the blaze-rifts of the smoke,
Flooded with moaning men, all sires, or sons.

Who fixed their stare on visions of their homes,
As they dashed down in cataracts from life?
Ah! as above the crimson inland sea,
The carnage rose and rose, dense as the fog,
Beneath which wildest billows huddle close,
And helpless gasp, like sheep beneath the snow,—
How his each unseen nerve and chord of heart
Quivered and quivered! if he was not swayed,
But stood firm, like an asp upon the hill,
Amid the awful tremor of its leaves,—
It was because his vision pierced the fog
Of gruesome carnage, and, beyond it, saw
Democracy waist deep in the whirling tide
That emptied into the shadow of the world,
Bereft of every ray, save those that warmed
His forehead from the halo of God's smile.

XII.

What! was Democracy to be engulfed,
And disappear forever, or, at least,
For ages; as an island in mid-sea
Agleam with cascades and with fruitful groves,
Except where from the sky the mountain swoops
As with the rage of hunger, and darts steep
Upon the grazing, unsuspecting wave—
Sinks with its peak, its cascades and its groves,
The laden ships at anchor in its bay,
And with the last hope of the watching crew,
Adrift with famine, who begin again,
To cast the dice for one another's blood;
And leaves no trace, except the flocks of birds,
That rise in columns like volcanic smoke,
And scatter for the land that few can reach?
Was thus to perish bold Democracy,
The giant who had dashed a kingdom down,
For meddling with his soul; then, clutching fast

The glaring, wild Atlantic 'mid her whelps,
Freed not her fury from his grasp, until
He reached the region where he walked with God,
Unhampered by the whim or craft of Kings?
Democracy, that shook the sleeping wilds
And woke them into cities with his will,
Then seized invading despotism and hurled
Its bleeding carcass like a thunder-bolt,
Back to the old world thro' the clouds of war;
Declaring with a voice that shook from Heaven,
All the ill stars foredooming men at birth:
"In this New World shall thrive no Old World wrong!"
Democracy, to perish in the act
Of towering on a mound of myriad men
Into the sky, and flinging from our shore,
With his fierce, lifted hands, and all his might,
The storm-mouthing monster of the Despot's get.
That from its lairs, the caverns on the coast,
Roamed rashly toward our mountains and broad plains,

To crush beneath its soul-destroying wrath
Our brethren dark of face, in multitudes
Beyond all reckoning, except of Justice
That counts the unshed tear, and asks of Cain:
“Where is thy brother?” though his skulking soul
Be but the murmur in the smallest shell,
Imbedded in the marl beneath the deep?
“No”; God said “No”! the hero heard that voice,
And like a lightning did his spirit flash
Thro’ every sinew of Democracy,
The giant, who, transfigured, drew his arms
Above him like a bow, and, with a spring,
Hurled forth the monster, raising, soon, a jet
From the abysmal billows into Heaven
In such a volume, it will never ceas
To fall in sunny showers upon our land,
And form a rainbow all around the globe.

XIII.

Rejoice, my countrymen! Lo! as the morn
Lifts from the sea the trumpet of the sun,
And blows a blast of light across the land,
Setting the grases in the mead and mount,
And blossoms in the orchard and the grove,
A-tingling bright with dew; so glory lifts
His trumpet from our country's depths of grief,
And, with the hero's deed and thought for sound
Sends forth a blast across the mountain range
Of rising ages, shaking every cloud
Into a fall of snow upon the peaks
To be a resting-place for angels' feet,
And the pure source of many a stream of joy,
To flash in cascades down the terraced slope,
Or, like the robin in and out the wood;
Then overflow the desert and the marsh,
And not in all the land leave one dry well
Where snakes may make a den and glare at thirst,

When, with a mossy bucket in his hand,
He glances down; for there he shall obtain
A draught of starlight on the sultriest day.

XIV.

Behold! the Angel, Reverence, who sees
In men who act sublime their greatness only—
Sees them as factors in the age's march,
And, in the chief, sees all his mighty host,—
Arises into form august, from out
The grateful hearts of many mournful millions,
And bows before this soldier in repose.

Awakening his spirit with her love,
She steps with him upon the purple bloom
Of brotherhood, which he had sown, and which
At Riverside, now quickens with such growth,
It spreads across our land—nay, bursts aloft
Into a planet from the earth, before
The raptured vision of the Angel hosts

And of all men. Look! by its fragrance borne,
It rises thro' the azure toward the throne
With steps innumerable, each a sky
Of dazzling luminaries, raised for him
Who helps his fellow-men—who is, in sooth,
An angel by maintaining right supreme
Lo! as he mounts, he draws our country up
Into the space beyond the sun, where shine
The Duties and the Rights of Man, twin stars—
More fulgent than the suns of nether space,
Were they all merged in one; and there forever,
With trails of spirits radiant with joy,
And reaching further than the drifts of stars
Which night is ever snowing into space,
Shall float America, lit by the beams
Of those transcendent planets nearing God.

* * *

COMMENTS OF THE PRESS.

In his blank verse picture of the funeral of General Grant, he has seized upon the pageantry and the significance of the occasion, in a striking degree.—*Springfield Republican*.

In his poem upon the burial of General Grant the impression of the funeral cortege and of the crowd is finely rendered, and with an unusually comprehensive grouping of masses and feeling of movement and sound.—*Boston Literary World*.

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